

House of Representatives, April 14, 1998. The Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding reported through REP. SCHIESSL, 60th DIST., Chairman of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY READING SUCCESS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) On or before September 1,
2 1999, each local and regional board of education
3 shall develop and implement a three-year plan to
4 improve the reading skills of students in grades
5 kindergarten to three, inclusive. The plan shall
6 be designed to allow all students to attain the
7 standard of reading competency developed by the
8 State Board of Education pursuant to section 23 of
9 public act 97-290, as amended by section 2 of this
10 act. The plan shall include: (1) The specific
11 instructional methods, strategies and activities
12 that will be used to teach reading; (2) a process
13 for assessing and assisting students who are at
14 risk of failing to learn to read by the end of
15 first grade; (3) periodic evaluations of the
16 reading level of students; (4) additional time for
17 remedial instruction for students who fail to make
18 progress in their reading development or are
19 reading below grade level; (5) in-service training
20 programs on the teaching of the language arts and
21 reading for elementary school teachers; (6) a
22 process for involving parents in addressing the
23 reading problems of their children, including a

24 requirement to provide information to parents on
25 strategies that can be used at home to improve the
26 child's prereading or reading skills; and (7)
27 ongoing data collection and monitoring of program
28 effectiveness. The plan may provide for the
29 establishment of school and public library
30 partnerships to improve prereading and reading
31 skills.

32 Sec. 2. Section 23 of public act 97-290 is
33 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
34 thereof:

35 (a) THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL PROVIDE
36 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL BOARDS
37 OF EDUCATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLANS
38 REQUIRED PURSUANT TO SECTION 1 OF THIS ACT. THE
39 DEPARTMENT SHALL ADVISE LOCAL AND REGIONAL BOARDS
40 OF EDUCATION ON: (1) METHODS AND STRATEGIES FOR
41 ASSESSING STUDENTS WHO ARE AT RISK OF FAILING TO
42 LEARN TO READ BY THE END OF FIRST GRADE; AND (2)
43 THE DEVELOPMENT OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMS ON
44 THE TEACHING OF THE LANGUAGE ARTS AND READING FOR
45 TEACHERS IN GRADES KINDERGARTEN TO THREE,
46 INCLUSIVE.

47 [(a)] (b) The State Board of Education shall
48 establish a standard of reading competency for use
49 by local and regional boards of education to
50 measure reading competency for students in grades
51 one to three, inclusive. The standard may be a
52 requirement for a certain score on a standardized
53 test.

54 [(b)] The Commissioner of Education shall
55 report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the
56 general statutes, on such standard to the joint
57 standing committee of the General Assembly having
58 cognizance of matters relating to education, by
59 February 1, 1998.]

60 Sec. 3. (NEW) As used in sections 3 to 6,
61 inclusive, and sections 8 and 9 of this act:

62 (1) "Priority school district" means a school
63 district described in section 10-266p of the
64 general statutes, as amended; and

65 (2) "Priority school" means a school in which
66 forty per cent or more of the lunches served are
67 served to students who are eligible for free or
68 reduced price lunches pursuant to federal law and
69 regulations, excluding such a school located in a
70 priority school district.

71 Sec. 4. (NEW) (a) The Commissioner of
72 Education shall establish, within available
73 appropriations, an early reading success grant
74 program to assist local and regional boards of
75 education for priority school districts and school
76 districts in which priority elementary schools are
77 located in: (1) Establishing full-day kindergarten
78 programs; (2) reducing class size in grades
79 kindergarten to three, inclusive, to not more than
80 eighteen students; and (3) establishing intensive
81 early intervention reading programs, including
82 after-school and summer programs, for students
83 identified as being at risk of failing to learn to
84 read by the end of first grade and students in
85 grades one to three, inclusive, who are reading
86 below grade level. Eligibility for grants pursuant
87 to this section shall be determined for a
88 five-year period based on a school district's
89 designation as a priority school district or as a
90 school district in which a priority elementary
91 school is located for the initial year of
92 application. In order to receive a grant, an
93 eligible board of education shall submit a plan
94 for the expenditure of grant funds, in accordance
95 with this section, to the Department of Education,
96 at such time and in such manner as the
97 commissioner prescribes. An eligible school
98 district may receive a grant for one or more
99 purposes pursuant to subdivisions (1) to (3),
100 inclusive, of this subsection. In the case of a
101 priority school district, if the board of
102 education does not seek funds for a particular
103 purpose, the plan shall include information on how
104 the school district is otherwise addressing the
105 issue. If the priority school district is not
106 addressing the issue sufficiently, the department
107 shall direct the school district to set aside a
108 certain percentage of the funds received pursuant
109 to this section for such purpose.

110 (b) (1) In the case of proposals for full-day
111 kindergarten programs, the plan shall include: (A)
112 Information on the number of full-day kindergarten
113 classes that will be offered initially and the
114 number of children to be enrolled in such classes;
115 (B) how the board anticipates expanding the number
116 of full-day kindergarten programs in future school
117 years; (C) the number of additional teachers
118 needed and any additional equipment needed for

119 purposes of such programs; (D) a description of
120 any proposed school building project that is
121 related to the need for additional space for
122 full-day kindergarten programs, including an
123 analysis of the different options available to
124 meet such need, such as relocatable classrooms,
125 the division of existing classrooms, an addition
126 to a building or new construction; (E) information
127 on the curriculum for the full-day kindergarten
128 program pursuant to subdivision (2) of this
129 subsection; (F) information on coordination
130 between the full-day kindergarten program and
131 school readiness programs for the purpose of
132 providing before and after school child care for
133 children attending the full-day kindergarten
134 program; and (G) any additional information the
135 commissioner deems relevant.

136 (2) A full-day kindergarten program that
137 receives funding pursuant to this subsection
138 shall: (A) Include language development and
139 appropriate reading readiness experiences; (B)
140 provide for the assessment of a student's
141 progress; (C) include a professional development
142 component in the teaching of the language arts,
143 reading and reading readiness for kindergarten
144 teachers; and (D) provide for parental
145 involvement.

146 (c) (1) In the case of proposals for the
147 reduction of class size in grades kindergarten to
148 three, inclusive, to not more than eighteen
149 students the plan shall include: (A) A time frame
150 for achieving such reduction in class size; (B)
151 information on the class size in such grades at
152 each school at the time of application for the
153 grant and the number of classes to be reduced in
154 size with grant funds; (C) the number of
155 additional teachers needed and any additional
156 equipment needed; (D) a description of any
157 proposed school building project related to the
158 need for additional space for smaller classes,
159 including an analysis of the different options
160 available to meet such need such as relocatable
161 classrooms, the division of existing classrooms,
162 an addition to a building or new construction; (E)
163 an estimate of the costs associated with
164 implementation of the plan; and (F) any additional
165 information the commissioner deems relevant.

166 (2) If a school district accepts funds
167 pursuant to this subsection, such school district
168 shall limit the class size of classes in which
169 core curriculum is taught in grades kindergarten
170 to three, inclusive, in accordance with its plan
171 to eighteen or less students, provided students
172 who enroll after October first in any school year
173 are not included for purposes of such count.

174 (d) In the case of proposals for intensive
175 early intervention reading programs including
176 after-school and summer programs, the plan shall:
177 (1) Provide for a period of time each day of
178 individualized or small group instruction for each
179 student; (2) provide for monitoring of students
180 and follow-up in subsequent grades; (3) include a
181 professional development component for teachers in
182 grades kindergarten to three, inclusive, that
183 emphasizes the teaching of language arts, reading
184 and reading readiness; (4) provide for parental
185 involvement and ensure that parents have access to
186 information on strategies that may be used at home
187 to improve prereading or reading skills; (5)
188 provide for data collection and program
189 evaluation; and (6) any additional information the
190 commissioner deems relevant.

191 (e) (1) The department shall use ninety per
192 cent of the funds appropriated for purposes of
193 this section for grants to priority school
194 districts. Priority school districts shall receive
195 grants based on their proportional share of the
196 sum of the products obtained by multiplying the
197 number of enrolled kindergarten students in each
198 priority school district for the year prior to the
199 year the grant is to be paid, by the ratio of the
200 average percentage of free and reduced price meals
201 for all severe need schools in such district to
202 the minimum percentage requirement for severe need
203 school eligibility. (2) The department shall use
204 nine per cent of such funds for competitive grants
205 to school districts in which a priority elementary
206 school is located. In awarding grants to school
207 districts in which priority elementary schools are
208 located, the department shall consider the town
209 wealth, as defined in subdivision (26) of section
210 10-262f of the general statutes, as amended, of
211 the town in which the school district is located,
212 or in the case of regional school districts, the
213 towns which comprise the regional school district.

214 Grants received by school districts in which
215 priority elementary schools are located shall not
216 exceed one hundred thousand dollars and shall be
217 used for the appropriate purpose at the priority
218 elementary school. (3) The department may retain
219 up to one per cent of such funds for coordination,
220 program evaluation and administration.

221 (f) No funds received pursuant to this
222 section shall be used to supplant federal, state
223 or local funding to the local or regional boards
224 of education for programs for grades kindergarten
225 to three, inclusive.

226 (g) Expenditure reports shall be filed with
227 the department as requested by the commissioner.
228 School districts shall refund (1) any unexpended
229 amounts at the close of the program for which the
230 grant is awarded, and (2) any amounts not expended
231 in accordance with the approved grant application.

232 Sec. 5. (NEW) (a) Each local and regional
233 board of education for a priority school district
234 shall offer a summer reading program, as described
235 in subsection (d) of section 4 of this act, to
236 children enrolled in kindergarten in the schools
237 under its jurisdiction who are determined by their
238 teacher to need additional reading and reading
239 readiness instruction.

240 (b) For each school year commencing on or
241 after July 1, 1999, each local and regional board
242 of education for a priority school district shall
243 require the schools under its jurisdiction to
244 evaluate the reading level of students enrolled in
245 grades one to three, inclusive, in the middle of
246 the school year and at the end of the school year.
247 If a student is determined to be reading below
248 grade level based on: (1) The middle of the year
249 evaluation, the school shall notify the parents or
250 guardian of the student of such result; and (2)
251 the end of the year evaluation, the school shall
252 develop a personal reading plan for such student.
253 The personal reading plan shall include (A)
254 measures to improve the student's reading level,
255 such as tutoring, a transitional class, or a
256 summer reading program as described in subsection
257 (d) of section 4 of this act, and (B) if a
258 decision is made to promote the student to the
259 next grade, justification for such promotion.

260 Sec. 6. Section 10-285a of the general
261 statutes, as amended by section 22 of public act

262 97-259 and section 19 of public act 97-290, is
263 amended by adding subsection (h) as follows:

264 (NEW) (h) Subject to the provisions of
265 section 7 of this act, if an elementary school
266 building project for a school in a priority school
267 district or for a priority school is necessary in
268 order to offer a full-day kindergarten program or
269 to reduce class size pursuant to section 4 of this
270 act, the percentage determined pursuant to this
271 section shall be increased by ten percentage
272 points for the portion of the building used
273 primarily for such full-day kindergarten program
274 or such reduced size classes.

275 Sec. 7. (NEW) In order to be eligible for the
276 percentage increase pursuant to subsection (h) of
277 section 10-285a of the general statutes, as
278 amended by section 6 of this act: (1) The project
279 shall be included in a plan developed pursuant to
280 section 4 of this act; (2) the local or regional
281 board of education shall present evidence to the
282 Department of Education that the project is the
283 best option for solving the need for additional
284 space and is cost-efficient; and (3) the project
285 shall meet the requirements established in chapter
286 173 of the general statutes, except that the
287 Commissioner of Education may waive any such
288 requirements for good cause.

289 Sec. 8. (NEW) (a) The Commissioner of
290 Education shall establish, within available bond
291 authorizations, a grant program to assist priority
292 school districts and school districts in which
293 priority schools are located in paying for general
294 improvements to school buildings. For purposes of
295 this section "General improvements to school
296 buildings" means work that (1) is generally not
297 eligible for reimbursement pursuant to chapter 173
298 of the general statutes and (2) is to (A) replace
299 windows, doors, boilers and other heating and
300 ventilation system components, internal
301 communications systems, lockers, and ceilings
302 including the installation of new drop ceilings,
303 (B) upgrade restrooms including the replacement of
304 fixtures, (C) upgrade and replace lighting, or (D)
305 install security equipment including fencing,
306 provided "general improvements to school
307 buildings" may include work not specified in this
308 subdivision if the school district provides
309 justification for such work acceptable to the

310 Commissioner of Education, but shall not include
311 routine maintenance such as painting, cleaning,
312 equipment repair or other minor repairs or work
313 done at the administrative facilities of a board
314 of education.

315 (b) Eligibility for grants pursuant to this
316 section shall be determined for a five-year period
317 based on a school district's designation in the
318 initial year of application as a priority school
319 district or as a school district in which a
320 priority school is located. Grant awards shall be
321 made annually contingent upon the filing of an
322 application and a satisfactory annual evaluation.
323 School districts shall apply for grants pursuant
324 to this section at such time and in such manner as
325 the commissioner prescribes.

326 (c) Ninety per cent of the funds available
327 for purposes of this section shall be used for
328 grants to priority school districts.

329 (d) Nine per cent of the funds available for
330 purposes of this section shall be used for
331 competitive grants to school districts in which
332 priority schools are located. Such grants shall be
333 in amounts to be determined by the commissioner
334 and shall be awarded based on demonstrated
335 resource needs, wealth and economic needs. Funds
336 received pursuant to this subsection shall be used
337 in the priority school.

338 (e) The Department of Education may retain up
339 to one per cent of the amount of funds
340 appropriated for purposes of this section for
341 coordination, program evaluation and
342 administration.

343 (f) No funds received by a school district
344 pursuant to this section shall be used to supplant
345 federal, state or local funding received by such
346 town for improvements to school buildings.

347 (g) Expenditure reports shall be filed with
348 the Department of Education as requested by the
349 commissioner. School districts shall refund (1)
350 any unexpended amounts at the close of the project
351 for which the grants are awarded and (2) any
352 amounts not expended in accordance with the
353 approved grant application.

354 (h) General improvements for which grants are
355 awarded in any year shall be completed by the end
356 of the succeeding fiscal year.

357 Sec. 9. (NEW) (a) The Commissioner of
358 Education shall establish, within available
359 appropriations, a grant program for priority
360 school districts to purchase library books to
361 promote better reading skills. For purposes of
362 this section "library books" means books that are
363 in school libraries and media centers for student
364 use and are either for reference purposes or to be
365 circulated.

366 (b) Eligibility for grants pursuant to this
367 section shall be determined for a five-year period
368 based on a school district's designation in the
369 initial year of application as a priority school
370 district.

371 (c) School districts shall apply for grants
372 pursuant to this section at such times and in such
373 manner as the commissioner prescribes.

374 (d) The Department of Education may retain up
375 to one per cent of the amount of funds
376 appropriated for purposes of this section for
377 coordination, program evaluation and
378 administration.

379 (e) No funds received by a school district
380 pursuant to this section shall be used to supplant
381 federal, state or local funding received by such
382 town for the purchase of library books.

383 Sec. 10. Subsection (b) of section 4 of
384 public act 97-259 is repealed and the following is
385 substituted in lieu thereof:

386 (b) The local school readiness council shall:
387 (1) Make recommendations to the chief elected
388 official and the superintendent of schools on
389 issues relating to school readiness, including any
390 applications for grants pursuant to sections 2 and
391 7 of [this act] PUBLIC ACT 97-259 and section
392 17b-749a of the general statutes, as amended by
393 section 5 of [this act] PUBLIC ACT 97-259; (2)
394 foster partnerships among providers of school
395 readiness programs; (3) assist in the
396 identification of the need for school readiness
397 programs and the number of children not being
398 served by such a program; (4) identify existing
399 and prospective resources and services available
400 to children and families; (5) facilitate the
401 coordination of the delivery of services to
402 children and families, including (A) referral
403 procedures, AND (B) BEFORE AND AFTER-SCHOOL CHILD
404 CARE FOR CHILDREN ATTENDING FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

405 PROGRAMS PURSUANT TO SECTION 4 OF THIS ACT; (6)
406 exchange information with other councils, the
407 community and organizations serving the needs of
408 children and families; (7) make recommendations to
409 school officials concerning transition from school
410 readiness programs to kindergarten; and (8)
411 encourage public participation.

412 Sec. 11. Subsection (a) of section 3 of
413 public act 97-259 is repealed and the following is
414 substituted in lieu thereof:

415 (a) Each school readiness program shall
416 include: (1) A plan for collaboration with other
417 community programs and services and for
418 coordination of resources in order to facilitate
419 full-day and year-round child care and education
420 programs for children of working parents and
421 parents in education or training programs; (2)
422 parent involvement, parenting education and
423 outreach; (3) referrals for health services,
424 including referrals for appropriate immunizations
425 and screenings; (4) nutrition services; (5)
426 referrals to family literacy programs that
427 incorporate adult basic education and provide for
428 the promotion of literacy through access to public
429 library services; (6) admission policies that
430 promote enrolment of children from different
431 racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds and from
432 other communities; (7) a plan of transition for
433 participating children from the school readiness
434 program to kindergarten AND PROVIDE FOR THE
435 TRANSFER OF RECORDS FROM THE PROGRAM TO THE
436 KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM; (8) a plan for professional
437 development for staff; (9) a sliding fee scale for
438 families participating in the program pursuant to
439 section 8 of [this act] PUBLIC ACT 97-259; and
440 (10) an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of
441 the program.

442 Sec. 12. Section 10-15 of the general
443 statutes is repealed and the following is
444 substituted in lieu thereof:

445 Public schools including kindergartens shall
446 be maintained in each town for at least one
447 hundred eighty days of actual school sessions
448 during each year. When public school sessions are
449 cancelled for reasons of inclement weather or
450 otherwise, the rescheduled sessions shall not be
451 held on Saturday or Sunday. The State Board of
452 Education (1) may authorize the shortening of any

453 school year for a school district, a school or a
454 portion of a school on account of an unavoidable
455 emergency, and (2) may authorize implementation of
456 scheduling of school sessions to permit full year
457 use of facilities which may not offer each child
458 one hundred eighty days of school sessions within
459 a given school year, but which assures an
460 opportunity for each child to average a minimum of
461 one hundred eighty days of school sessions per
462 year during thirteen years of educational
463 opportunity in the elementary and secondary
464 schools. Notwithstanding the provisions of this
465 section and section 10-16, AS AMENDED BY THIS ACT,
466 the State Board of Education may, upon application
467 by a local or regional board of education, approve
468 for any single school year, in whole or in part, a
469 plan to implement alternative scheduling of school
470 sessions which assures at least four hundred fifty
471 hours of actual school work for nursery schools
472 and HALF-DAY kindergartens and at least nine
473 hundred hours of actual school work for FULL-DAY
474 KINDERGARTEN AND grades one to twelve, inclusive.

475 Sec. 13. Section 10-16 of the general
476 statutes is repealed and the following is
477 substituted in lieu thereof:

478 Each school district shall provide in each
479 school year no less than one hundred and eighty
480 days of actual school sessions for grades
481 kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, nine hundred
482 hours of actual school work for FULL-DAY
483 KINDERGARTEN AND grades one to twelve, inclusive,
484 and four hundred and fifty hours of HALF-DAY
485 kindergarten, provided school districts shall not
486 count more than seven hours of actual school work
487 in any school day towards the total required for
488 the school year. If weather conditions result in
489 an early dismissal or a delayed opening of school,
490 a school district which maintains separate morning
491 and afternoon HALF-DAY kindergarten sessions may
492 provide either a morning or afternoon HALF-DAY
493 kindergarten session on such day.

494 Sec. 14. Subsection (a) of section 10-145d of
495 the general statutes is repealed and the following
496 is substituted in lieu thereof:

497 (a) The State Board of Education shall,
498 pursuant to chapter 54, adopt such regulations as
499 may be necessary to carry out the provisions of
500 sections 10-144o, 10-145a to 10-145d, inclusive,

501 AS AMENDED BY THIS ACT, 10-145f and 10-146b. Such
502 regulations shall provide for (1) the
503 establishment of an appeal panel to review any
504 decision to deny the issuance of a certificate
505 authorized under said section 10-145b; (2) the
506 establishment of requirements for subject area
507 endorsements; (3) the extension of the time to
508 complete requirements for certificates under said
509 section 10-145b; (4) the establishment of
510 requirements for administrator and supervisor
511 certificates; (5) the composition of, and the
512 procedures to be utilized by, the assessment teams
513 in implementing the beginning educator program;
514 (6) procedures and criteria for issuing
515 certificates to persons whose certificates have
516 lapsed or persons with non-public-school or
517 out-of-state teaching experience; (7) the criteria
518 for defining a major course of study; [and] (8) a
519 requirement that on and after July 1, 1993, in
520 order to be eligible to obtain an initial educator
521 certificate with an elementary endorsement, each
522 person [shall] be required to complete a survey
523 course in United States history comprised of not
524 fewer than three semester hours; AND (9) A
525 REQUIREMENT THAT ON AND AFTER JULY 1, 2003, IN
526 ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE TO OBTAIN AN INITIAL EDUCATOR
527 CERTIFICATE WITH AN EARLY CHILDHOOD NURSERY
528 THROUGH GRADE THREE OR AN ELEMENTARY ENDORSEMENT,
529 EACH PERSON BE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE A
530 COMPREHENSIVE READING INSTRUCTION COURSE COMPRISED
531 OF NOT LESS THAN SIX SEMESTER HOURS. Such
532 regulations may provide for exceptions to
533 accommodate specific certification endorsement
534 areas.

535 Sec. 15. Subsection (1) of section 10-145b of
536 the general statutes is repealed and the following
537 is substituted in lieu thereof:

538 (1) (1) For certified employees of local and
539 regional boards of education, except as provided
540 in this subdivision, each professional educator
541 certificate shall be valid for five years and
542 continued every five years thereafter upon the
543 successful completion of professional development
544 activities which shall consist of not less than
545 ninety hours of continuing education, as
546 determined by the local or regional board of
547 education in accordance with this section, during
548 each successive five-year period. SUCH CONTINUING

549 EDUCATION COMPLETED BY CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES WITH AN
550 EARLY CHILDHOOD NURSERY THROUGH GRADE THREE OR AN
551 ELEMENTARY ENDORSEMENT WHO HOLD A POSITION
552 REQUIRING SUCH AN ENDORSEMENT SHALL INCLUDE AT
553 LEAST FIFTEEN HOURS OF TRAINING IN THE TEACHING OF
554 THE LANGUAGE ARTS, READING AND READING READINESS
555 DURING EACH FIVE-YEAR PERIOD. Such continuing
556 education completed by (A) the superintendent of
557 schools and (B) employees employed in positions
558 requiring an intermediate administrator or
559 supervisory certificate, or the equivalent
560 thereof, and whose administrative or supervisory
561 duties equal at least fifty per cent of the
562 assigned time of such employee, shall include at
563 least fifteen hours of training in the evaluation
564 of teachers pursuant to section 10-151b during
565 each five-year period. During each five-year
566 period in which a professional educator
567 certificate is valid, a holder of such certificate
568 who has not completed the ninety hours of
569 continuing education required pursuant to this
570 subdivision, and who has not been employed while
571 holding such certificate by a local or regional
572 board of education for all or part of the
573 five-year period, shall, upon application, be
574 reissued such certificate for five years minus any
575 period of time such holder was employed while
576 holding such certificate by a local or regional
577 board of education, provided there shall be only
578 one such reissuance during each five-year period
579 in which such certificate is valid. A certified
580 employee of a local or regional board of education
581 who is a member of the General Assembly and who
582 has not completed the ninety hours of continuing
583 education required pursuant to this subdivision
584 for continuation of his certificate, upon
585 application, shall be reissued a professional
586 educator certificate for a period of time equal to
587 six months for each year he served in the General
588 Assembly during the previous five years.
589 Continuing education hours completed during the
590 previous five years shall be applied toward such
591 ninety-hour requirement which shall be completed
592 during the reissuance period in order for such
593 employee to be eligible to have his certificate
594 continued. The cost of the professional
595 development activities required under this
596 subsection for certified employees of local or

597 regional boards of education shall be shared by
598 the state and local or regional boards of
599 education, except for those activities identified
600 by the State Board of Education as the
601 responsibility of the certificate holder. Each
602 local and regional board of education shall make
603 available, annually, at no cost to its certified
604 employees not fewer than eighteen hours of
605 professional development activities for continuing
606 education credit. Such activities may be made
607 available by a board of education directly,
608 through a regional educational service center or
609 cooperative arrangement with another board of
610 education or through arrangements with any
611 continuing education provider approved by the
612 State Board of Education. Local and regional
613 boards of education shall grant continuing
614 education credit for professional development
615 activities which the certified employees of the
616 board of education are required to attend,
617 professional development activities offered in
618 accordance with the plan developed pursuant to
619 subsection (b) of section 10-220a, or professional
620 development activities which the board may approve
621 for any individual certified employee. Each board
622 of education shall determine the specific
623 professional development activities to be made
624 available with the advice and assistance of the
625 teachers employed by such board, including
626 representatives of the exclusive bargaining unit
627 for such teachers pursuant to section 10-153b. The
628 time and location for the provision of such
629 activities shall be in accordance with either an
630 agreement between the board of education and the
631 exclusive bargaining unit pursuant to said section
632 10-153b or, in the absence of such agreement or to
633 the extent such agreement does not provide for the
634 time and location of all such activities, in
635 accordance with a determination by the board of
636 education.

637 (2) Each local and regional board of
638 education shall attest to the state Department of
639 Education, in such form and at such time as the
640 commissioner shall prescribe, that professional
641 development activities for which continuing
642 education credit is granted by the board: (A) Are
643 planned in response to identified needs, (B) are
644 provided by qualified instructional personnel, as

645 appropriate, (C) have the requirements for
646 participation in the activity shared with
647 participants before the commencement of the
648 activity, (D) are evaluated in terms of its
649 effectiveness and its contribution to the
650 attainment of school or district-wide goals and
651 (E) are documented in accordance with procedures
652 established by the State Board of Education. At
653 the end of each five-year period each professional
654 educator shall attest to the state Department of
655 Education, in such form and at such time as the
656 commissioner shall prescribe, that the
657 professional educator has successfully completed
658 ninety hours of continuing education.

659 (3) In the event that the state Department of
660 Education notifies the local or regional board of
661 education that the provisions of subdivision (2)
662 of this subsection have not been met and that
663 specific corrective action is necessary, the local
664 or regional board of education shall take such
665 corrective action immediately. The department
666 shall not invalidate continuing education credit
667 awarded prior to such notice.

668 Sec. 16. Section 10-184 of the general
669 statutes is repealed and the following is
670 substituted in lieu thereof:

671 All parents and those who have the care of
672 children shall bring them up in some lawful and
673 honest employment and instruct them or cause them
674 to be instructed in reading, writing, spelling,
675 English grammar, geography, arithmetic and United
676 States history and in citizenship, including a
677 study of the town, state and federal governments.
678 [Each] SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION,
679 EACH parent or other person having control of a
680 child [seven years of age and over and under
681 sixteen years of] age FIVE TO SIXTEEN, INCLUSIVE,
682 shall cause such child to attend a public [day]
683 school regularly during the hours and terms the
684 public school in the district [wherein] IN WHICH
685 such child resides is in session, [or while the
686 school is in session in which provision for the
687 instruction of such child is made according to
688 law,] unless the parent or person having control
689 of such child is able to show that the child is
690 elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the
691 studies taught in the public schools. THE PARENT
692 OR PERSON HAVING CONTROL OF A CHILD FIVE YEARS OF

693 AGE SHALL HAVE THE OPTION OF NOT SENDING THE CHILD
694 TO SCHOOL UNTIL THE CHILD IS SIX YEARS OF AGE.

695 Sec. 17. Subsection (a) of section 10-198a of
696 the general statutes is repealed and the following
697 is substituted in lieu thereof:

698 (a) For purposes of this section, "truant"
699 means a child age [seven] SIX to sixteen,
700 inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private
701 school and has four unexcused absences from school
702 in any one month or ten unexcused absences from
703 school in any school year.

704 Sec. 18. Section 10-200 of the general
705 statutes is repealed and the following is
706 substituted in lieu thereof:

707 Each city and town may adopt ordinances
708 concerning habitual truants from school and
709 children between the ages of [seven] SIX and
710 sixteen years wandering about its streets or
711 public places, having no lawful occupation and not
712 attending school; and may make such ordinances
713 respecting such children as shall conduce to their
714 welfare and to public order, imposing penalties,
715 not exceeding twenty dollars, for any one breach
716 thereof. The police in any town, city or borough
717 and bailiffs, constables, sheriffs and deputy
718 sheriffs in their respective precincts shall
719 arrest all such children found anywhere beyond the
720 proper control of their parents or guardians,
721 during the usual school hours of the school terms,
722 and may stop any child under sixteen years of age
723 during such hours and ascertain whether such child
724 is a truant from school, and, if such child is,
725 shall send such child to school. For purposes of
726 this section, "habitual truant" means a child age
727 [seven] SIX to sixteen, inclusive, enrolled in a
728 public or private school who has twenty unexcused
729 absences within a school year.

730 Sec. 19. Subsection (a) of section 10-220 of
731 the general statutes, as amended by section 21 of
732 public act 97-290, is repealed and the following
733 is substituted in lieu thereof:

734 (a) Each local or regional board of education
735 shall maintain good public elementary and
736 secondary schools, implement the educational
737 interests of the state as defined in section
738 10-4a, AS AMENDED, and provide such other
739 educational activities as in its judgment will
740 best serve the interests of the school district;

741 provided any board of education may secure such
742 opportunities in another school district in
743 accordance with provisions of the general statutes
744 and shall give all the children of the school
745 district as nearly equal advantages as may be
746 practicable; shall provide an appropriate learning
747 environment for its students which includes (1)
748 adequate instructional books, supplies, materials,
749 equipment, staffing, facilities and technology,
750 (2) equitable allocation of resources among its
751 schools, and (3) a safe school setting; shall have
752 charge of the schools of its respective school
753 district; shall make a continuing study of the
754 need for school facilities and of a long-term
755 school building program and from time to time make
756 recommendations based on such study to the town;
757 shall report annually to the Commissioner of
758 Education on the condition of its facilities and
759 the action taken to implement its long-term school
760 building program, which report the commissioner
761 shall use to prepare an annual report that he
762 shall submit in accordance with section 11-4a to
763 the joint standing committee of the General
764 Assembly having cognizance of education; shall
765 advise the Commissioner of Education of the
766 relationship between any individual school
767 building project pursuant to chapter 173 and such
768 long-term school building program; shall have the
769 care, maintenance and operation of buildings,
770 lands, apparatus and other property used for
771 school purposes and at all times shall insure all
772 such buildings and all capital equipment contained
773 therein against loss in an amount not less than
774 eighty per cent of replacement cost; shall
775 determine the number, age and qualifications of
776 the pupils to be admitted into each school; shall
777 employ and dismiss the teachers of the schools of
778 such district subject to the provisions of
779 sections 10-151, AS AMENDED, and 10-158a, AS
780 AMENDED; shall designate the schools which shall
781 be attended by the various children within the
782 school district; shall make such provisions as
783 will enable each child of school age, residing in
784 the district to attend some public day school for
785 the period required by law and provide for the
786 transportation of children wherever transportation
787 is reasonable and desirable, and for such purpose
788 may make contracts covering periods of not more

789 than five years; may place in an alternative
790 school program or other suitable educational
791 program a pupil enrolling in school who is
792 nineteen years of age or older and cannot acquire
793 a sufficient number of credits for graduation by
794 age twenty-one; may arrange with the board of
795 education of an adjacent town for the instruction
796 therein of such children as can attend school in
797 such adjacent town more conveniently; shall cause
798 each child [seven years of age and over and under
799 sixteen] AGE SIX TO SIXTEEN, INCLUSIVE, living in
800 the school district to attend school in accordance
801 with the provisions of section 10-184, AS AMENDED
802 BY SECTION 16 OF THIS ACT, and shall perform all
803 acts required of it by the town or necessary to
804 carry into effect the powers and duties imposed by
805 law.

806 Sec. 20. Subsection (a) of section 10-220a of
807 the general statutes, as amended by section 2 of
808 public act 97-45 and section 2 of public act
809 97-61, is repealed and the following is
810 substituted in lieu thereof:

811 (a) Each local or regional board of education
812 shall provide an in-service training program for
813 its teachers, administrators and pupil personnel
814 who hold the initial educator, provisional
815 educator or professional educator certificate.
816 Such program shall be submitted to the
817 Commissioner of Education and shall provide such
818 teachers, administrators and pupil personnel with
819 information on (1) the nature and the relationship
820 of drugs, as defined in subdivision (17) of
821 section 21a-240, and alcohol to health and
822 personality development, and procedures for
823 discouraging their abuse, (2) health and mental
824 health risk reduction education which includes,
825 but need not be limited to, the prevention of
826 risk-taking behavior by children and the
827 relationship of such behavior to substance abuse,
828 pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases,
829 including HIV-infection and AIDS, as defined in
830 section 19a-581, violence, child abuse and youth
831 suicide, (3) the growth and development of
832 exceptional children, including handicapped and
833 gifted and talented children and children who may
834 require special education, and methods for
835 identifying, planning for and working effectively
836 with special needs children in a regular

837 classroom, (4) school violence prevention and
838 conflict resolution, (5) cardiopulmonary
839 resuscitation and other emergency life saving
840 procedures, [and] (6) computer and other
841 information technology as applied to student
842 learning and classroom instruction, communications
843 and data management, AND (7) THE TEACHING OF THE
844 LANGUAGE ARTS, READING AND READING READINESS FOR
845 TEACHERS IN GRADES KINDERGARTEN TO THREE,
846 INCLUSIVE. The State Board of Education, within
847 available appropriations and utilizing available
848 materials, shall assist and encourage local and
849 regional boards of education to include: (A)
850 Holocaust education and awareness; (B) the
851 historical events surrounding the Great Famine in
852 Ireland; (C) African-American history; (D) Puerto
853 Rican history; (E) Native American history; (F)
854 personal financial management; and (G) topics
855 approved by the state board upon the request of
856 local or regional boards of education as part of
857 in-service training programs pursuant to this
858 subsection.

859 Sec. 21. Subsection (a) of section 10-283 of
860 the general statutes, as amended by section 76 of
861 public act 97-265, is repealed and the following
862 is substituted in lieu thereof:

863 (a) (1) Each town or regional school district
864 shall be eligible to apply for and accept grants
865 for a school building project as provided in this
866 chapter. Any town desiring a grant for a public
867 school building project may, by vote of its
868 legislative body, authorize the board of education
869 of such town to apply to the Commissioner of
870 Education and to accept or reject such grant for
871 the town. Any regional school board may vote to
872 authorize the supervising agent of the regional
873 school district to apply to the Commissioner of
874 Education for and to accept or reject such grant
875 for the district. Applications for such grants
876 under this chapter shall be made by the
877 superintendent of schools of such town or regional
878 school district on the form provided and in the
879 manner prescribed by the Commissioner of
880 Education. Grant applications for school building
881 projects shall be reviewed by the Commissioner of
882 Education on the basis of categories for building
883 projects and standards for school construction
884 established by the State Board of Education in

885 accordance with this section, provided grant
886 applications submitted for purposes of subsection
887 (a) of section 10-65, AS AMENDED, or section
888 10-76e shall be reviewed annually by the
889 commissioner on the basis of the educational needs
890 of the applicant.

891 (2) Each school building project shall be
892 assigned to a category on the basis of whether
893 such project is primarily required to: [(1)] (A)
894 Create new facilities or alter existing facilities
895 to provide for mandatory instructional programs
896 pursuant to this chapter, for physical education
897 facilities in compliance with Title IX of the
898 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1972
899 where such programs or such compliance cannot be
900 provided within existing facilities or for the
901 correction of code violations which cannot be
902 reasonably addressed within existing program
903 space; [(2)] (B) create new facilities or alter
904 existing facilities to enhance mandatory
905 instructional programs pursuant to this chapter or
906 provide comparable facilities among schools to all
907 students at the same grade level or levels within
908 the school district unless such project is
909 otherwise explicitly included in another category
910 pursuant to this section; and [(3)] (C) create new
911 facilities or alter existing facilities to provide
912 supportive services, provided in no event shall
913 such supportive services include swimming pools,
914 auditoriums, outdoor athletic facilities, tennis
915 courts, elementary school playgrounds, site
916 improvement or garages or storage, parking or
917 general recreation areas. All applications
918 submitted prior to the first day of July in any
919 year shall be reviewed promptly by the
920 commissioner and the amount of the grant for which
921 such project is eligible shall be estimated. The
922 commissioner shall annually prepare a listing of
923 all such eligible school building projects listed
924 by category together with the amount of the
925 estimated grants therefor and shall submit the
926 same to the Governor and the General Assembly on
927 or before the fifteenth day of December, except as
928 provided in section 10-283a, with a request for
929 authorization to enter into grant commitments.
930 Each such listing submitted after December 1995
931 shall include a separate schedule of authorized
932 projects which have changed in scope or cost to a

933 degree determined by the commissioner. The
934 percentage determined pursuant to section 10-285a
935 at the time a school building project on such
936 schedule was originally authorized shall be used
937 for purposes of the grant for such project. The
938 General Assembly shall annually authorize the
939 commissioner to enter into grant commitments on
940 behalf of the state in accordance with the
941 commissioner's categorized listing for such
942 projects as the General Assembly shall determine.
943 The commissioner may not enter into any such grant
944 commitments except pursuant to such legislative
945 authorization. Any regional school district which
946 assumes the responsibility for completion of a
947 public school building project shall be eligible
948 for a grant pursuant to subdivision (5) or (6), as
949 the case may be, of subsection (a) of section
950 10-286, AS AMENDED, when such project is completed
951 and accepted by such regional school district.
952 [For the purpose of any final grant calculation
953 completed during the fiscal year ending June 30,
954 1984, and for each fiscal year thereafter, in
955 computing the amount of a state grant for a school
956 building project involving the construction of a
957 new school facility or the purchase or lease of a
958 facility for which a grant application is
959 submitted within five years after any abandonment,
960 sale, lease, demolition or redirection of use of
961 any school facility constructed or renovated with
962 state assistance, the Commissioner of Education
963 shall deduct from the net eligible cost of such
964 school building project any grant amounts paid or
965 due on the abandoned, sold, leased, demolished or
966 redirected facility from the date such facility
967 was abandoned, sold, leased, demolished or
968 redirected. No such deduction shall be made for
969 any grant which was paid or is being paid pursuant
970 to subsection (b) of this section, subsection (a)
971 of section 10-65 or section 10-76e.]

972 (3) ALL FINAL CALCULATIONS COMPLETED BY THE
973 DEPARTMENT FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AUTHORIZED
974 ON OR AFTER JULY 1, 1996, SHALL INCLUDE A
975 COMPUTATION OF THE STATE PRINCIPAL GRANT AMORTIZED
976 ON A STRAIGHT LINE BASIS OVER A TWENTY-YEAR PERIOD
977 FOR PROJECTS WITH COSTS EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN
978 TWO MILLION DOLLARS AND OVER A TEN-YEAR PERIOD FOR
979 PROJECTS WITH COSTS LESS THAN TWO MILLION DOLLARS.
980 ANY TOWN OR REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT WHICH

981 ABANDONS, SELLS, LEASES, DEMOLISHES OR OTHERWISE
982 REDIRECTS A SCHOOL BUILDING TO A NONSCHOOL USE
983 DURING SUCH AMORTIZATION PERIOD SHALL REFUND TO
984 THE STATE THE UNAMORTIZED BALANCE REMAINING AS OF
985 THE DATE THE REDIRECTION OCCURS. THE AMORTIZATION
986 ANNIVERSARY DATE FOR A PROJECT SHALL BE THE DATE
987 THE PROJECT WAS ACCEPTED AS COMPLETE BY THE LOCAL
988 OR REGIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION. A TOWN OR REGIONAL
989 SCHOOL DISTRICT REQUIRED TO MAKE A REFUND TO THE
990 STATE PURSUANT TO THIS SUBDIVISION MAY REQUEST
991 FORGIVENESS OF SUCH REFUND IF THE BUILDING IS
992 REDIRECTED FOR PUBLIC USE. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL
993 INCLUDE AS AN ADDENDUM TO THE ANNUAL SCHOOL
994 CONSTRUCTION PRIORITY LIST ALL THOSE TOWNS
995 REQUESTING FORGIVENESS. GENERAL ASSEMBLY APPROVAL
996 OF THE PRIORITY LIST CONTAINING SUCH REQUEST SHALL
997 CONSTITUTE APPROVAL OF SUCH REQUEST. THIS
998 SUBDIVISION SHALL NOT APPLY TO PROJECTS PURSUANT
999 TO SUBSECTION (b) OF THIS SECTION OR PROJECTS
1000 SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 10-285c.

1001 Sec. 22. The Commissioner of Education shall
1002 establish, within available appropriations, two
1003 pilot early childhood learning programs. Each
1004 pilot program shall be established in a priority
1005 school district pursuant to section 10-266p of the
1006 general statutes, as amended. One program shall be
1007 in a municipality with a population of fifty to
1008 one hundred thousand, inclusive, and one program
1009 shall be in a municipality with a population over
1010 one hundred thousand. Each pilot program may
1011 include a laboratory school and a model day care
1012 program that serves sixty children ages three to
1013 five. The Department of Education shall issue a
1014 request for proposals for the pilot programs.

1015 Sec. 23. (NEW) (a) The Commissioner of
1016 Education shall conduct, within available
1017 appropriations, a longitudinal study that examines
1018 the educational progress of children both during
1019 and following participation in early reading
1020 success grant programs pursuant to section 4 of
1021 this act.

1022 (b) The Commissioner of Education shall
1023 report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the
1024 general statutes, to the joint standing committee
1025 of the General Assembly having cognizance of
1026 matters relating to education on the longitudinal
1027 study by January 1, 2001.

1028 Sec. 24. This act shall take effect July 1,
1029 1998.

1030 STATEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONERS: In section
1031 3 in the definition of priority school the phrase
1032 "lunches served are served to" was added for
1033 accuracy. In section 21, subdivision (3) was
1034 rewritten for clarity.

1035 ED COMMITTEE VOTE: YEA 31 NAY 0 JFS C/R FIN
1036 FIN COMMITTEE VOTE: YEA 45 NAY 0 JFS-LCO

* * * * *

"THE FOLLOWING FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND BILL ANALYSIS ARE PREPARED FOR THE BENEFIT OF MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SOLELY FOR PURPOSES OF INFORMATION, SUMMARIZATION AND EXPLANATION AND DO NOT REPRESENT THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OR EITHER HOUSE THEREOF FOR ANY PURPOSE."

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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT - BILL NUMBER sHB 5657

STATE IMPACT	Cost, Potential Savings, Implements Provisions of the Budget, see explanation below
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MUNICIPAL IMPACT	Cost, Revenue Gain, Potential Cost, STATE MANDATE, see explanation below
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STATE AGENCY(S)	Department of Education
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EXPLANATION OF ESTIMATES:

STATE AND MUNICIPAL IMPACT: This bill results in a cost to the state both in General Fund appropriations and in bond authorizations. The bill also results in a revenue gain and cost to local and regional school districts.

The budget, as passed by the Appropriations Committee (sHB 5021), contains \$23.5 million within the Department of Education for programs within the bill. The READ First program contains \$20.5 million for distribution to Priority School Districts (PSD) and priority schools. The PSDs will receive 90% of this funding for programs to improve reading, reduce class size, provide summer programs and establish full-day kindergarten. Priority schools can compete for 9% of these funds for the same purpose. The Department of Education will retain 1% of these funds for program administration and assistance. The budget also contains \$3.0 million to assist PSDs in the purchase of library books for school libraries and media centers.

The bond package, as passed by the Finance Committee (sHB 5039), contains \$25.0 million in bond

authorizations to assist PSDs and priority school districts in paying for general improvements in school buildings not currently covered by the existing School Construction Grant program. The debt service associated with this authorization has already been included within SHB 5021.

The bill also provides a 10% bonus for school construction in PSDs related to reduce class size in grades K-3 and to provide full-day kindergarten. This provision results in an increased cost of the state, and thus, a revenue gain to PSDs. The exact fiscal impact would be dependent on the actions of PSDs. The potential state cost associated with the 10% bonus for full-day kindergarten could be as high as \$17.0 million or as low as \$2.0 million. The additional cost impact of providing the bonus for reduced class size would be significant if PSDs chose to construct classrooms to reduce class size.

The bill also establishes two Early Childhood Pilot programs for which no funding has been provided in SHB 5021. This provision, if funded, would be a revenue gain to two towns.

The bill also establishes a new process for the recovery of state funds that were used to pay for the construction of local school buildings, which then were converted, to other uses. The new process which extends the refund provision time period from five years to as many as twenty years results in a potential savings to the state which is a potential cost to local and regional school districts. The exact impact is dependent on any building conversions occurring and thus cannot be determined.

The bill also lowers the age at which children must attend school from 7 to 5 with an option for parents to choose not to send the children to school until 6. This provision will result in some costs to both the state and local school districts, as it will increase school attendance. Both the state and local school districts will likely have minor increases in costs as most children already attend school by age 5. Additionally, as state costs would rise for the most part in the ECS grant, the cap on increases in the ECS grant would prevent any large increase in state costs. Local school districts would only have marginal cost

increases due to this provision, thus, their overall cost increase would be minimal.

The bill also mandates all local and regional boards of education to develop and implement a three-year plan to improve reading skills of students in early grades. Additionally, it mandates PSDs to test their first through third-grade students' reading levels and develop personal reading programs for students who do not read well. These mandates will require increased expenditures by local school districts and increase workloads. The exact costs will be determined by the effort made by the local entities.

All other provisions of the bill are technical and/or have no fiscal impact.

* * * * *

OLR BILL ANALYSIS

sHB 5657

AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY READING SUCCESS

SUMMARY: This bill:

1. requires each school district to develop and implement a three-year plan to improve the reading skills of students in early grades;
2. establishes state grants to help the 14 largest and most economically and educationally needy school districts ("priority districts") and elementary schools ("priority schools") establish full-day kindergarten programs, improve reading skills of younger students, reduce class sizes in early grades, make improvements to school buildings, and, in priority districts, buy books for school libraries;
3. requires priority districts to test their first- through third-grade students' reading levels, offer summer reading programs to students who do not read well, and promote students who do not read at grade level only

with extra help and special justification;

4. requires children to start school at age 5 instead of age 7 unless their parents choose not to send them to school until age 6;
5. gives priority districts and schools an additional 10% state reimbursement for construction projects related to establishing all-day kindergarten programs or reducing class sizes in the early grades;
6. requires new and already certified elementary teachers to be trained in how to teach reading;
7. establishes a new process for recovering state school construction grants from districts that apply for new grants within a specified period after abandoning schools built or renovated with state assistance and extends the time during which payback is required;
8. requires coordination between school readiness and kindergarten programs;
9. establishes two pilot early childhood education programs;
10. requires the education commissioner to do a long-range study of the effects of the early reading success grant programs on participating children; and
11. makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1998

FURTHER EXPLANATION

Early Reading Plan (Secs. 1 and 2)

The bill requires each local and regional board of education, by September 1, 1999, to develop and implement a three-year plan to improve the reading skills of its students in kindergarten through the third grade. The plan must allow all students to reach the State Board of Education's reading competency

standard. It must include (1) specific methods and strategies to teach reading; (2) ways to assess and help students in danger of not learning to read by the end of first grade; (3) periodic evaluations of students' reading levels; (4) more time for instructing students who do not progress in reading or who read below grade level; (5) in-service training for elementary school teachers in how to teach reading and language arts; (6) ways to involve parents in addressing their children's reading problems, including information on ways to improve children's reading and prereading skills at home; and (7) ongoing data collection and program monitoring. The State Department of Education (SDE) must provide technical assistance to school boards in developing the plans and advise boards on their plans' student assessment and teacher training requirements.

The bill allows a plan to establish partnerships between schools and public libraries to improve reading and prereading skills.

Early School Success Grants (Secs. 3 & 4)

The bill requires the education commissioner to establish a grant program, within available appropriations, to help priority school districts and districts that have priority elementary schools to: (1) establish full-day kindergarten programs; (2) reduce class sizes in kindergarten through third grade to a maximum of 18 students per class; and (3) establish intensive early reading programs, including after-school and summer-school programs, for students (a) identified as being in danger of not learning to read by the end of first grade and (b) in the first through third grades who read below grade level.

Under the bill, as under current law, the "priority school districts" are the 14 largest districts with the most educationally and economically needy children. A "priority school" is a school that is not in a priority district but in which at least 40% of the school lunches are served to students eligible for free or reduced prices under the federal school lunch program.

Full-Day Kindergarten Programs. To receive a state grant, a full-day kindergarten program must (1) include language development and appropriate reading readiness

experiences; (2) assess student progress; (3) include professional development for kindergarten teachers in teaching reading, reading readiness, and language arts; and (4) provide for parents' involvement.

Districts' proposals for all-day kindergarten programs must include: (1) the number of full-day kindergarten classes the district will initially offer and how many children will be enrolled; (2) how the district plans to expand the number of programs in the future; (3) how many more teachers and how much additional equipment the district needs for the programs; (4) a description of any proposed school building project related to the need for more space for full-day kindergarten, with an analysis of different options, including portable classrooms, dividing existing classrooms, adding to a building, or new construction; (5) curriculum information; (6) information on coordination between full-day kindergarten and school readiness programs to provide before- and after-school care for children in the kindergarten programs; and (7) any other information the commissioner considers necessary.

Reducing Class Size. A school district that accepts state money under the bill to reduce class sizes must limit the size of its classes in which core curriculum in grades K-3 is taught to no more than 18 students, not counting students who enroll after October 1.

Class-size reduction plans must include: (1) the time it will take to achieve reductions; (2) information on the class size in grades K-3 in each school at the time of application and how many are to be reduced with the grant; (3) how many more teachers and what additional equipment is needed; (4) a description of any proposed school building project related to the need for more space, with an analysis of different options, such as portable classrooms, dividing existing classrooms, adding to a building, or new construction; (5) how much the plan will cost; and (6) other information the commissioner considers relevant.

Early Reading Program. Plans for intensive early reading intervention programs funded with state grants must include: (1) a daily period of individual and small-group instruction for each student; (2) monitoring and follow-up in later grades; (3) professional development for kindergarten through

third-grade teachers emphasizing language arts, reading, and reading readiness; (4) a provision for involving parents and ensuring that they have access to at-home strategies for improving prereading and reading skills; (5) data collection and program evaluation; and (6) additional information the commissioner thinks relevant.

Grant Allocation

Priority Districts. SDE must use 90% of the funds appropriated for early reading success grants to priority school districts. Funds must be distributed according to districts' proportional shares of the number of students enrolled in kindergarten in the year before the grant application multiplied by the ratio of the average percentage of free and reduced price meals for all the district's severe need schools to the minimum percentage needed to be designated a severe need school. (A "severe need school" is basically a priority school in a priority district; that is, one at which 40% or more of the lunches are served to students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.)

Districts With Priority Elementary Schools. SDE must use 9% of the appropriated funds for competitive grants to these districts. The commissioner must consider town wealth in awarding grants. Grants to these districts are limited to \$100,000 each and must be used for the appropriate purpose at the priority elementary school.

SDE. The bill allows the SDE to retain up to 1% of the appropriated funds for coordination, administration, and program evaluation.

Other Requirements. The bill bars districts from using a grant to supplant any other state, federal, or local funding for kindergarten through third grade programs.

A district eligible as a priority district or district with a priority school in the first year it applies for a grant remains so for five years. An eligible district must submit a plan for spending its grant to the SDE according to a procedure and timetable specified by the commissioner. A district can receive a grant for any or all of the specified purposes (full-day kindergarten, early reading programs, and class size reduction). But a priority district that does not ask for funds for a

particular purpose must describe how it is otherwise addressing the issue. If it is not doing so sufficiently, SDE must require it to set aside a specific percentage of its early school success grant for that purpose.

Districts must file spending reports with the commissioner. They must refund any unspent amounts at the end of the program for which the grant was awarded as well as any amounts not spent in accordance with the approved grant application.

Summer Reading Program, Reading Evaluation, and Promotion (Sec. 5)

The bill requires each priority school district to offer a summer reading program that meets its early reading program requirements to all kindergarteners in its schools whose teachers decide they need additional reading and reading readiness instruction.

In the middle and at the end of each school year, starting July 1, 1999, the bill requires priority districts to evaluate the reading levels of their students in grades one to three. If the mid-year evaluation shows a student reading below grade level, the school must notify the child's parent or guardian. If the end-of-year evaluation shows the student is still reading below grade level, the school must develop a personal reading plan for him. The plan must include measures to improve his reading, such as tutoring, a transitional class, or the summer reading program. If the school decides to promote the student to the next grade, the plan must also justify the promotion.

Construction Reimbursement Increase (Secs. 6 and 7)

The bill gives a 10% increase in the usual school construction reimbursement for the part of an elementary school building project in a priority school or a priority district to be used primarily for a full-day kindergarten program or to reduce K-3 class sizes to no more than 18 students. To be eligible for the higher reimbursement, the school board must show the SDE that the building project is cost-efficient and the best choice for solving the need for more space. The project must also meet all the regular school

construction project requirements unless the department waives a requirement for good cause.

School Building Improvement Grants (Sec. 8)

The bill establishes a grant program, funded by bond authorizations, to reimburse priority school districts and districts with priority schools for a share of the cost of general improvements in school buildings not normally reimbursable by state school construction grants. Eligible projects are restroom upgrades; door, window, boiler and other heating and ventilating component replacement; installing, replacing, and upgrading ceilings, lockers, internal communication systems, security equipment, fences, and lighting; and any other work approved by the education commissioner after justification by the district. Grants may not be used for routine maintenance such as painting, cleaning, or minor or equipment repairs, or for work on the board's administrative facilities. Funded projects must be completed by the end of the fiscal year following the year of the grant.

The grants are subject to the same allocation and eligibility requirements as the early school success grants.

Grants for Library Books (Sec. 9)

The bill establishes a grant, within available appropriations, to help priority districts buy library books for school libraries and media centers to promote better reading skills. Books must be for students to use either for reference or in circulation. Districts must apply for grants when and how the commissioner specifies. Grants are subject to the same requirements, procedures, and limitations as the early school success grants.

Teacher Training (Secs. 14, 15, and 20)

Beginning July 1, 2003, the bill requires those seeking initial teaching certificates with early childhood through grade three or elementary endorsements to complete a comprehensive reading instruction course of at least six semester hours. It also requires teachers already holding certificates with early childhood through grade three or elementary endorsements to

complete at least 15 hours of training every five years in teaching language arts, reading, and reading readiness. The 15-hour requirement is part of the 90-hour continuing education requirement for certified teachers. The bill also requires school districts to offer in-service training programs in these subjects for their K-3 teachers.

Coordination with School Readiness Programs (Secs. 10 and 11)

The bill requires state-funded school readiness programs to transfer children's records to kindergarten programs. It also requires local school readiness councils to help coordinate before- and after-school child care programs for children in the full-day kindergarten programs funded by the bill as part of their duty to coordinate delivery of school readiness program services.

Recovery Requirements for School Construction Grants (Sec. 21)

Under current law, if a district asks for a school construction grant to build, buy, or lease new school within five years after it has abandoned, sold, leased, demolished, or redirected the use of any school building built or renovated with state assistance, the SDE must deduct from the new grant any money paid or due for the old building from the date the district took it out of service. The deduction requirement does not apply to state grants to remedy damage from fire or natural disasters or correct code violations or to grants for regional vocational agricultural and cooperative regional special education centers.

This bill extends the time during which the refund provisions apply from five years for all projects to up to 10 or 20 years, depending on the project cost. And it changes the way the refund amount is calculated. It also allows for forgiveness of a refund if the school building involved is redirected to another public use, but only if the General Assembly approves it in each case.

Under the bill, for projects authorized on or after July 1, 1996, the SDE must amortize the state grant principal on a straight-line basis over 20 years for

projects costing \$2 million or more and over 10 years for less expensive projects, starting from the date the district accepted the project as complete. If a district takes the school building out of service or converts it to a nonschool use during the amortization period, it must refund the unamortized balance of the grant to the state.

Districts may ask the state to forgive the refund if the school building was redirected to another public use. The SDE must add any such requests to the school construction priority list submitted to the General Assembly every year. The bill specifies that General Assembly's approval of the priority list also constitutes approval of the forgiveness requests.

As with the current law, the refund provisions do not apply to grants for schools damaged by fires or natural disasters or grants to correct code violations. The bill extends the refund provisions to regional vocational-agriculture and cooperative special education centers. It excludes buildings that were 100% funded by the state (such as interdistrict magnet schools). In those cases, if the building is redirected to another use within 20 years, the law already requires its title to revert to the state unless the commissioner waives the reversion for good cause.

Pilot Early Learning Programs (Sec. 22)

The bill requires the commissioner to establish two pilot early childhood learning programs in priority school districts, one with a population over 100,000 and one with a population of 50,000 to 100,000. Each one may include a laboratory school and a model day care program for 60 children ages three to five. The bill requires the SDE to issue requests for proposals for the pilots.

Longitudinal Study (Sec.23)

The bill requires the commissioner, within available appropriations, to conduct a longitudinal study of the educational progress of children during and after their participation in early reading programs funded by the early success grants and to report to the Education Committee on the study by January 1, 2001.

Technical and Conforming Changes (Secs. 2, 12,13, 17, 18, and 19)

The bill changes the truancy laws to conform to the reduction in the mandatory school attendance age from seven to six. It also changes minimum school year requirements to distinguish between full- and half-day kindergarten programs and specify that a full-day kindergarten program is one that assures at least 900 hours of actual schoolwork. It also eliminates an obsolete section requiring the education commissioner to report his reading competency standard to the Education Committee by February 1, 1998.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference
Yea 31 Nay 0

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 45 Nay 0